

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAMASC 01506 250649Z

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ACTION TRSE-00

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 ISO-00 SNM-02 AID-05 JUSE-00 /017 W

----- 039750

R 240945Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3267

/DEA HEADQUARTERS WASHDC

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DEPT PLS PASS US CUSTOMS

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: SNAR

SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL TRAINING

REF: A. STATE 62933; B. DAMASCUS 0982

1. EMBASSY HAS BEEN PRESSING SYRIAN CUSTOMS FOR NAMES AND BIO DATA REQUIRED FOR SYRIAN CANDIDATES. CUSTOMS DIRECTOR SHAARANI IS INTERESTED IN ARRANGING PARTICIPATION FOR FIVE OF HIS OFFICERS AND TOLD EMBOFF APRIL 22 HE EXPECTED TO HAVE ALL NECESSARY INFO WITHIN ONE WEEK. HE ALSO STATED, HOWEVER, THAT SYRIAN CUSTOMS HAD ABSOLUTELY NO FUNDS AVAILABLE TO PAY INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL FOR PARTICIPANTS.

2. SHAARANI SAID THAT SYRIAN DELAY IN RESPONDING WAS MERELY BUREAUCRATIC AND ADDED THAT MINISTER OF FINANCE, HIS SUPERIOR, FAVORED SYRIAN PARTICIPATION.

3. WE HAVE NOTED COMMENTS FROM OTHER POSTS REGARDING POTENTIAL NEGATIVE REACTIONS FROM OTHER GOVERNMENTS IF THEIR PARTICIPANTS DISCOVERED U.S. PAYING TRAVEL COSTS FOR SYRIANS BUT NOT FOR THEM. WOULD NOTE RE SYRIA THAT THIS IS FIRST U.S. TRAINING COURSE OF ANY SORT WHICH SYRIAN CUSTOMS WILL HAVE PARTICIPATED IN AT LEAST SINCE BREAK IN
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PAGE 02 DAMASC 01506 250649Z

RELATIONS IN 1967. IT IS ALSO FIRST TIME SYRIAN

OFFICIALS WILL HAVE PARTICIPATED WITH US IN INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL TRAINING PROGRAM. HOPEFULLY, THIS FIRST EXPERIENCE WILL BUILD AN APPRECIATION OF THE VALUE OF U.S. TRAINING AND FURTHER COOPERATION IN THIS FIELD SO THAT IN FUTURE SARG WILL BE AMENABLE TO SHARING COSTS OF THESE PROGRAMS WITH US. IN THIS INITIAL INSTANCE, HOWEVER, BELIEVE POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO US FULLY JUSTIFY MAKING EXCEPTION OF USUAL PRACTICE ON INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL.
MURPHY

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